

[0038] Having recognized the source of much confusion and frustration experienced by young children first learning and using computers, that being the failure of the standard computer keyboard to display letters that may be recognized by these young children, a teaching apparatus is presented. One embodiment of such a teaching apparatus that enables these young children to enter data into a computer is illustrated in FIG. 1a. In this embodiment of the present invention, the teaching apparatus 100 takes the form of a computer keyboard overlay 102 that is adapted to cover at least a portion of the computer keyboard 104 used with a typical computer. As may be seen from this FIG. 1a, a preferred embodiment of the present invention utilizes a keyboard overlay 102 that covers the entire keyboard 104, including function and numeric keys 110 for which this problem does not exist. This keyboard overlay preferably includes a plurality of individual key accommodating structures 106. In a preferred embodiment, at least the top surface 108 of these key accommodating structures 106 is transparent to allow the indication on the individual keys 110 of the keyboard 104 to be visible through the overlay for perception by the user as may be seen in FIG. 1b. This keyboard overlay 102 is preferably fabricated from a thin flexible material as is well known in the art to allow for proper actuation of individual keys upon selection by a user. In the embodiment of the present invention illustrated in FIG. 1a, the entire keyboard overlay 102 is fabricated from a thin transparent material such that all indications and markings on the computer keyboard 104 may be visible therethrough.

[0039] An alternate embodiment of the teaching apparatus of the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 2a for use with ergonomically designed computer keyboards 104'. As may be seen from FIG. 2b, the keyboard overlay 102' also includes a plurality of individual key accommodating structures 106 that are specifically designed to accommodate the keys of the ergonomic 104'. One skilled in the art will recognize that alternate constructions of the teaching apparatus 100 of the present invention may be made to fit keyboards of alternate constructions without departing from the scope or spirit of the present invention, and therefore are reserved herein. One skilled in the art will also recognize that, while the embodiments illustrated in FIG. 1a and FIG. 2a are shown as being transparent, or as having at least the top surface 108 of the individual key accommodating structures 106 being transparent, portions or the entirety of the keyboard overlay may be opaque. In such an

embodiment preferably the information identifying each individual key will be included on the overlay such that a user may easily identify the individual keys. Of importance, the teaching apparatus of the present invention preferably displays both upper case and lower case letters in association with one another so that the education of the early learner may be further supported through the use of such an embodiment.

[0043] FIG. 4 illustrates an embodiment of the teaching apparatus 100 of the present invention. This apparatus 100 may be constructed as discussed above with regard to FIG. 1a from a standard keyboard 104 and a keyboard overlay 102. Alternatively, this embodiment of the teaching apparatus 100 may comprise a keyboard 118 having a plurality of individual keys 120, a portion of which include a glyph of an upper case letter and a glyph of an associate lower case letter thereon.

[0047] FIG. 11 illustrates an embodiment of the teaching apparatus 100 of the present invention. This apparatus 100 may be constructed as discussed above with regard to FIG. 2a from an ergonomic keyboard 104' and a keyboard overlay 102'. Alternatively, this embodiment of the teaching apparatus 100 may comprise a keyboard 118 having a plurality of individual keys 120, a portion of which include a glyph of an upper case letter and a glyph of an associate lower case letter thereon.

IN THE DRAWINGS:

The Applicant has submitted herewith new drawings, FIGs. 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b, that label separately and properly the enlarged views originally included as part of FIGs. 1 and 2 in accordance with the Draftsperson's requirement. Consideration and approval of these amended drawings are respectfully solicited.